

KCC 4809 (K-C 16,733)  
PATENTIN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Withdrawn) A process for splicing a first portion of absorbent material to a second portion of absorbent material to form a longer, continuous length of absorbent material suitable for uninterrupted sequential infeed to a processing machine, the process comprising the steps of:

placing a trailing end of said first portion adjacent a leading end of said second portion;

aligning said trailing end of said first portion with said leading end of said second portion; and

attaching a piece of splicing material to said trailing end of the first portion and said leading end of the second portion, said piece of splicing material having a fluid permeability at least about as great as a fluid permeability of said first portion of absorbent material and at least about as great as a fluid permeability of said second portion of absorbent material.

2. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 1 wherein said piece of splicing material is adapted for thermal bonding to said first and second portions of absorbent material, and said step of attaching the piece to said respective ends of the first and second portions includes applying heat energy to said piece of splicing material.

3. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 2 wherein said step of attaching the piece of splicing material includes compressing the piece of splicing material and the respective ends of the first and second portions of absorbent material.

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4. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 1 wherein said splicing material is a carded web comprising bicomponent fibers.

5. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of placing the trailing end of said first portion adjacent the leading end of said second portion comprises arranging said ends squarely end-to-end.

6. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of placing the trailing end of said first portion adjacent the leading end of said second portion comprises overlapping said ends.

7. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 1 wherein each of said ends of the first and second portions of absorbent material has a first face and an opposite second face, and wherein said step of attaching the piece of splicing material comprises attaching the piece to at least one of said first and second faces of each of said ends.

8. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 7 further comprising a step of orienting the first face of the trailing end of the first portion and the first face of the leading end of the second portion in an identical direction, and wherein said step of attaching the piece of splicing material comprises attaching said piece to the first face of the trailing end of the first portion and to the first face of the leading end of the second portion.

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9. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 8 wherein said piece of splicing material is a first piece of splicing material attached to said first face of the trailing end of the first portion and to said first face of the leading end of the second portion and the process further comprises attaching a second piece of splicing material to the second face of the trailing end of the first portion and to the second face of the leading end of the second portion.

10. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 7 further comprising a step of orienting the first face of the trailing end of the first portion and the first face of the leading end of the second portion in an identical direction, and wherein said step of attaching the piece of splicing material comprises attaching said piece to the first face of the end of the first portion and to the second face of the end of the second portion.

11. (Withdrawn) A process as set forth in claim 7 wherein said step of attaching the piece of splicing material comprises wrapping said piece around both of said faces of each of said ends.

12. (currently amended) A continuous length of absorbent material for uninterrupted sequential infeed to a processing machine, comprising:

a first portion of absorbent material having a trailing end;  
a second portion of absorbent material having a leading end adjacent to and aligned with the trailing end of the first portion of absorbent material thereby defining an aligned junction of the first and second portions having a length extending generally transverse of the first and second portions;

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a piece of splicing material attached to both of said trailing end of said first portion and to said leading end of said second portion of absorbent material such that the splicing material extends continuously over a majority of the length of the aligned junction, said splicing material including fibers having polyolefin content and having a fluid permeability at least about 25% as great as a fluid permeability of said first portion of absorbent material and at least about 25% as great as said second portion of absorbent material.

13. (original) A continuous length of absorbent material as set forth in claim 12 wherein said splicing material has a fluid permeability at least about as great as a fluid permeability of said first portion of absorbent material and at least about as great as said second portion of absorbent material.

14. (original) A continuous length of absorbent material as set forth in claim 13 wherein said piece of splicing material is thermally bonded to said trailing end of said first portion and to said leading end of said second portion.

15. (original) A continuous length of absorbent material as said forth in claim 14 wherein said piece of splicing material comprises a carded web of bicomponent fibers.

16. (Withdrawn) A personal care absorbent article having a spliced absorbent material, the article comprising:

a fluid permeable body side liner for placement adjacent a wearer; and

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an absorbent core attached to the body side liner for absorbing fluid passing through the liner, said absorbent core including:

a first portion of absorbent material;

a second portion of absorbent material; and

a piece of splicing material directly attached to said first and second portions of absorbent material, said splicing material having a fluid permeability at least about 25% as great as a fluid permeability of said first portion of absorbent material and at least about 25% as great as said second portion of absorbent material.

17. (Withdrawn) A personal care absorbent article as set forth in claim 16 wherein said splicing material has a fluid permeability at least about as great as a fluid permeability of said first portion of absorbent material and at least about as great as said second portion of absorbent material.

18. (Withdrawn) A personal care absorbent article as set forth in claim 17 wherein said article is a feminine hygiene product.

19. (Withdrawn) A personal care absorbent article as set forth in claim 17 wherein said article is a diaper or training pants for a child.

20. (Withdrawn) A personal care absorbent article as set forth in claim 17 wherein said article is an incontinence product for an adult.

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21. (Withdrawn) A process for splicing a first portion of absorbent material to a second portion of absorbent material to form a longer, continuous length of absorbent material suitable for uninterrupted sequential infeed to a processing machine, the process comprising the steps of:

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placing a trailing end of said first portion adjacent a leading end of said second portion;

aligning said trailing end of said first portion with said leading end of said second portion; and

attaching a piece of splicing material to said trailing end of the first portion and said leading end of the second portion, said piece of splicing material having a fluid permeability at least about 25% as great as a fluid permeability of said first portion of absorbent material and at least about 25% as great as a fluid permeability of said second portion of absorbent material.

22. (new) A continuous length of absorbent material as set forth in claim 12 wherein said first and second portions of absorbent material each include fibers having polyolefin content.